

[Industrial Folklore of Chicago]

Accession no.

W 3613

Date received

10/10/40

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1

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7p

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WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Industrial folklore of Chicago

Place of origin Chicago, Illinois Date 4/13/39

Library of Congress

Project worker Nelson Algren

Project editor

Remarks

W3613

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview Industrial Lore

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

980 Words.

May 26 1939

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Nelson Algren

ADDRESS 3232 Victoria Avenue

DATE April 13, 1939

SUBJECT Industrial folklore of Chicago

Library of Congress

1. Date and time of interview

April 3, 1939

2. Place of interview

Davey Day Luggage Shop

1019 1/2 E. 47th Street

3. Name and address of informant

Davey Day

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

none

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

none

6. Description of room, houses surroundings, etc.

Well-equipped luggage shop in a Negro neighborhood.

FORM B

Personal History of Informant

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

Library of Congress

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Nelson Algren

ADDRESS 3232 Victoria Avenue

DATE April 13, 1939

SUBJECT Industrial folklore of Chicago

NAME OF INFORMANT Davey Day

1. Ancestry Of Russian-Jewish extraction
2. Place and date of birth Chicago, Illinois
3. Family Single. Mother, father, three sisters and a younger brother.
4. Places lived in, with dates

Has lived around the west-side most of his life, but at present is living "in a northside hotel"- did not care to divulge details.

5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant

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Five feet nine and one half inches, weighing, stripped, one hundred and thirty-five pounds. Rangy, raw-boned, dark eyes and hair, lends appearance, when dressed, of man weighing about one hundred and fifty-five pounds.

10. Other Points gained in 'interview

FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Nelson Algren

ADDRESS 3232 Victoria Avenue

DATE April 13, 1939

SUBJECT Industrial folklore of Chicago

NAME OF INFORMANT Davey Day

"You're from that newspaper I guess? I always come down for a newspaper man - I guess there's a story in this alright. Aint there?"

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"Yep, I'm him; Davey Day, that fast-stepping Jewboy on his way up, all fight and fancy footwork. And nothin' wrong with the old heart, I guess you know, was you listenin' Monday nights.

"Well, that one's over now, but Pian(Co-manager) is going to get him again for me at the ball park. I'll beat him(Henry Armstrong) there, this is my lucky town. Dropped just one pro fight in my life here, that was in 1931, my fourth fight. I've licked everybody you want to name right around this town . . Frankie Sagilio, Roger Bernard, Bobby Pacho and I guess maybe a hundred others. And you can bet that Armstrong will got on that list, too, 'cause little Davey is on his way up and he got that ol' confidence.

"I licked Lou Ambers too, but that was in N. Y. and he was the champ, so they tossed him the duke. Wait'll I'm the champ though - I'll keep it right here in my old home town, and they'll be tossin' the duke at me like that too. I'll be the houseman then.

FORM D

Extra Comment

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Nelson Algren

ADDRESS 3232 Victoria Avenue

DATE April 13, 1939

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NAME OF INFORMANT Davey Day

"Reason I lost to Armstrong was I couldn't see him no more. I was real han'icapped. Wasn't for not bein' able to see him i could have gone twenty rounds 'cause i got determination, I got that old confidence.

"I never got a cut eye in my life, but in that twelfth round I was prayin' he'd slice that eye wide open on me then I'd a been able to see through it, I might of gone on to win even, but I couldn't see at all, that's the reason the ref called it. "It swollen up tight as a drumstick on me."

"Yeh, his eye was cut up awright too - they looked at it in the eighth and I guess if that was a white guy they would of stopped it on a tko and give it to me. But you know how it is with a burrhead, - they'd let him get killed in there 'cause that's how it is. He didn't have no lip left when he was through fightin' Ambers, but he got the duke just the same. You think they'd would of let a white guy go on in that shape? Say, you know how many stitches they took in that lip Ambers give him? - fourteen, that's how many. Armstrong told me himself, he swallowed so much blood he was sick for two days after.

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"I don't know where they got the idea Armstrong hurt me though, He certainly disappointed me with the power he showed, I'll say that much for myself . . But you got to give that jig credit for one thing, be never quits swingin'. If you'd of brought a windmill into that ring and turned it so fast that it got me too dizzy to stand up any longer, and I toppled, that would have been nearly the same effect as Armstrong beating me. In that twelfth, for instance, I was covering my right eye, and waiting for him to lot up for a second so I could open up again, but he kept swinging so often that it got me a little dazed, and that gave him the opening for the punch that knocked me down.

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"No, I wasn't hurt. I even wanted to put up a argument for Fitzpatrick calling the fight, but Pian stopped me. I wanted to take nine counts and then got up after him again, I could easy have finished the round. He can't hit. He wasn't throwin' nothin' but hands.

"How'd I feel? - Never better in ny life. I went in there in the pink - I live right, I guess you know. Armstrong found that out. He started getting sour toward the eighth. I could almost hear him saying: What's wrong with this guy? Why doesn't he go down like the others? But I stayed up just in spite. And he felt darn lucky when he seen me bend in in that twelfth, and even luckier when they stopped it.

"But Armstrong's awright. He never said a word to me either before or after the fight, but next day he come up to my hotel where I was stayin' an' said he was sorry he swelled up my eye. Well, I'm just 4 sorry he didn't rip that thing wide open. He'd of give me a chance to see that way. But he's an intelligent man, he aint like lots of fighters. You know, reads books and things, real bright, you can tell that when you talk to him, he's a smart jig."

(Here the Interviewer interposed that, in listening to the match over the radio, the announcer had said that; going back to his own corner between the fifth and sixth rounds, Armstrong had been muttering to himself. The announcer said he had done this between rounds of several recent fights, and had questioned Armstrong about the habit. Armstrong had then replied that when he felt that he was certain to win, he began memorizing his radio announcement, at the close of the bout. 'When I know I'm going to win I start thinking up something to say' Armstrong had explained. The interviewer now asked Day whether Armstrong's confidence was really so substantial as this might indicate. Day was offended at the implication that Armstrong was certain the fight was as good as over so early as the sixth round:

"Don't let nobody kid you, fella. He talks to himself cause he's gettin' punchy. He done that first in the Ambers fight and he wasn't figurin' on no radio announcement then - if you seen that one. It was Ambers should a been talkin' to himself if that was the case, an'

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same thing with me. Say, when you see a fighter goin' back to his corner talkin' to hisself it means jest one thing, that his heels is beginning to click. You can take my word on that one, that burrhead's heels is getting rounder every out. Why don't he 5 fight Angott then?

"Say, you come around when I fight Montanez. That one'll be in the ball-park too I hope. Then they'll give me another crack at that Armstrong. If they do, Pian is going to make them let me have him here. O I'll beat him awright the next out, less'n Angott gets him first. Angott got that ol' confidence. I got it too, that old determination, that's why I get along. Any time you want a story for your newspaper you just drop in here an' tell the ol' man you want it an' I'll come down. I don't live in this neighborhood o'course, I live in a hotel up on the northside. But I'll come over awright. Every little bit helps you know. Say, a dame wrote me a fan latter. I looked like George Raft she said. He use d to be a pug too, I guess somebody must of told her I was punchy awready, I would believe anything. Say, I don't look like no George Raft. He got a interest in Angott though.